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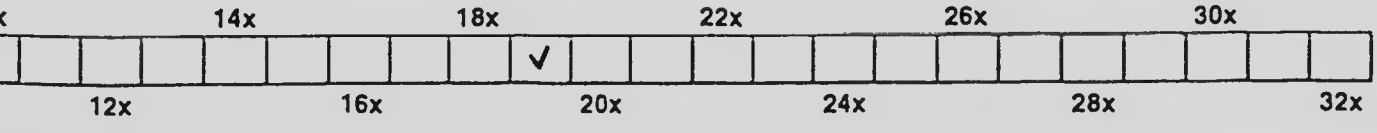

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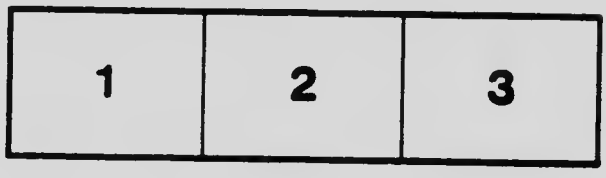

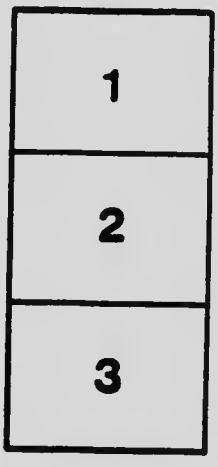

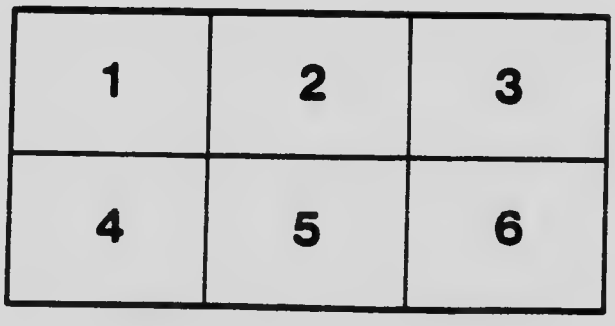

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ONDAY MORNING of all mornings a time apart the herald of fresh enterprise. Watch the other days as they pass to the tune of the week's piping, and you will find that Monday bears an individuality of her own, lacking to her less conspicuous sisters, who follow in orderly procession. Saturday, it is true, wears a cloak half lined with crimson as for a frolic, and Sunday, donning gala petticoats, bids all good folk to follow precedent. But it is not through any gay allurement that the first work day calls to us. She is the embodiment of reality; the texture of strife is woven into her very raiment, be it drab or purple. For, whether we come to her with lagging footsteps, and a deal of soul

fearfulness, as though to some Black Monday of history, or full of fresh energy for work and struggle, which shall act as a very Achilles armour in the battle with weekly adversities, she flaunts a white ensign before us, with its clear motto the "again" of new ventures.

The spirit of such venture throbbed in the heart of Josephine Latour, as she tapped lightly at the back door of Madame Creton's house one Monday morning in late November. The breath of autumn was in the air; of grey, colourless autumn when Nature, like some aged crone conscious of her desolation, waits patiently for the white mantle which shall hide her poverty.

Josephine was seventeen years old, and but six months returned from the Convent at Terrebonne. They had been six anxious months; for at home, in the small back bedroom, her father had lain during the last five, a helpless cripple, her mother tending him as she would a fretful child. Her brothers were still at school, and much of the family savings had gone during the first months of Monsieur Latour's illness.

Black days were behind her [illegible] stood over against the future; but the morning these things had taken [illegible] that which lay uppermost in [illegible] heart was the inspiration of Youth.

She had courage; life and work were open to her; and, above all, she possessed a talisman which made the rough road smooth beneath her feet—she was loved, [illegible] in return. What did it matter to her, then, that the streets were bare and cheerless, or that the chill wind pierced beneath her thin jacket? She had hastened, light-footed and resolute, and now her cheeks glowed, like the red Farnese apples ripened not half an hour since, in the market place.

Katie, Madame Croton's old servant opened to her, not very pleasantly, perhaps, for the morning had found her heavy-footed.

"Oh, ye're come for the wash, are ye? Well, it's Herself knows best, but I'd be lookin' far to give the wash to childer. A bit of a cratur' more fit for the convent than out of it! Sakes alive! and the poor thing hasn't a word of English to spake. And what'll I be doin' with hathen

words in me mouth? It's Herself can do the talkin'!"

She laboured across the kitchen, taking no further notice of Josephine, once she had entered, than of the yellow cat, that lay secure from her displeasure beneath the square table. Such conduct was disconcerting, and, for a minute or two, the girl remained hesitating beside the entrance. Opposite to her a door stood half open, and through it her eyes caught the reassuring glimpse of a row of wash tubs. Surely she might venture into her own province! She made the attempt, summoning courage to her aid as she passed the enemy.

The laundry was small, but spotless. Changing quickly from her street clothes, Josephine was soon at work. Once established over the steaming wash tub, her arms buried in the frothy water, she felt more at ease. Outside in the kitchen, Katie tramped to and fro, still muttering "Méchante," Josephine dubbed her, with a little jerk of the head, at thought of her uncalled for greeting. But her mind was too happy to take offence. Presently,

when a banging door told of the grumbler's exit, she ventured to sing a little, as she struggled with soap and washboard.

"Par derrièr' chez ma tante
"Il y a-t un bois joli,
"Le rossignol y chante
"Et la jour et la nuit.
"Gai lon la, gai le rosier
"Du joli mois de mai."

Her voice was clear, and she sang softly, as if more conscious of the joy which lay behind the words than of their real meaning. So intent was she upon her work that Madame Creton had stood watching from the doorway several minutes before Josephine, turning suddenly, perceived her. The soap slipped from between the girl's hands, falling with a splash back into the water her face grew crimson.

"Oh, Madame, pardon!" she stammered, and then, overcome by momentary confusion, remained silent.

But Madame Creton was not displeased Josephine was an experiment; one of the many experiments to be sure, in which,

with her large heart and limited income, she remained foolish enough to indulge. But this time, as she watched her young laundress, Madame felt sure of a good bargain.

"Good-morning, Josephine; you are at work early. No, you have not displeased me. You have a pretty voice, no one here will object to your singing."

A pair of grey eyes beamed their gratitude; then, as Madame lingered a moment, the girl turning suddenly from her work, stood before her mistress, with clasped hands and bosom heaving, as she endeavoured to control the excitement in her voice.

"Madame, if I work hard, so very hard, and you are pleased. If the clothes are white and smooth and beautiful, like the Sisters' Madame will speak for me as a laundress at the Hospital?"

"But, Josephine——"

"Oui, Madame, you think that I am too young, do you not? But I am seventeen, and see—though I am not large I am strong. Voila——"

She flung back her arms as she spoke, and

wanted a slim, youthful figure firm and shapely in her print dress and big blue apron.

"Eh bien! Josephine. But why are you so anxious for the position?"

"Oh, Madame" the words came slowly, pregnant with an intensity of feeling too deep for mere expression "my poor father will never work again. All day long my mother sews but she cannot leave him. Then there are the boys at school, Pierre and Marcel. I have two days work here, but if I get four more at the Hospital, I can make ten dollars a week. They have no one but me!"

She watched anxiously, while Madame Creton reviewed the circumstances in her own mind.

"But, Josephine, why does not Pierre work? He is a big boy now"

"That is impossible, Madame" there was a touch of pride in the voice, which Madame was quick to detect "he is to be a priest. He has a vocation he is called It will take seven years." Then she added quickly. "But it is a good thing to work

for God, Madame; and I have promised my father that Pierre shall be a priest."

There was nothing to be said: the girl's tone was final. Mistress and servant waited for a few minutes, looking at one another in silence; then it was Josephine who spoke, her face brightening.

"The Hospital pays so well. If I wash there, I can work hard, hard, and save perhaps in five years enough money, and then——"

"Well, Josephine?"

"We can be married." Here was the secret, stumbled upon by accident. Madame Creton guessed as much from the hot cheeks and trembling lips. She drew a chair from the corner, and seating herself, bade Josephine do likewise.

"Now tell me everything, Josephine, and I will see what we can do."

Josephine's fingers twisted nervously.

"It is Louis Raymond." She hesitated, but looking up caught an encouraging smile, and words flowed freely.

"Oh, Madame, he is un bon garçon, Louis! He works in Hull, at the lumber

yards. I have known him now a long time. Last year, when I came from the Convent, and we were in trouble, he was kind every day he thought of me! And he is good! His poor mother is lame now for five years, Louis lives with her he is like a daughter I am a lucky girl, am I not? Every night I pray la Sainte Vierge to make me strong, that I may work hard "

She stopped for want of breath, then added quickly

"But, Madame, you look grave, have I talked too much?"

"No, no, Josephine." Madame Creton rose, and laid her hand lightly on the young shoulder. "I am glad you told me. But five years is a long time, Josephine a long time for both."

"But Louis is true, Madame. He is a good worker he will rise."

Madame nodded. "There, go back to your work. I will see what can be done."

And Josephine, happy in that assurance, turned once more to her washtubs.

Madame Creton's house stood back from

the street, a strip of green lawn separating it from the grey, cement pavement, which stretched in unbroken severity along the straight line of the avenue. On either side of the thoroughfare, were rows of tall elm trees; their branches interlaced overhead, so that, in summer time, a high arch of green shut out the scorching heat of noon day and called the mind to thoughts of cool woods and pleasant country.

In the shadow of one of these trees, bare and gaunt enough now, under the hand of autumn, Louis Raymond awaited Josephine, one evening, a fortnight after her eventful Monday. He was some four years her senior, of medium height, and strongly built. His stolid countenance was saved from stupidity by the piercing quality of a pair of shrewd, deep-set blue eyes, which held occasional flashes of humour. His face, by reason of much exposure in all weathers, was ruddy and well tanned, his hair, from the same cause, had faded to a lustreless brown.

He was roughly clad, and in appearance typical of his class. A pair of high black

boots reached to the calf of his leg; his brown trousers were loose and baggy. A faded brown sweater took the place of shirt and waistcoat; over this he wore a short blue jacket, into the pockets of which his hands were deeply thrust. His soft brown hat was pushed back from his forehead; and as he paced slowly to and fro, with bent head, he whistled softly to himself, but showed no sign of impatience.

Presently there came the sound of footsteps on the gravel path which led to the back entrance, and Louis turned quickly to meet his sweetheart. The light from the street lamp fell upon her face, showing it weary, but flushed and very happy; even before she spoke he guessed the gist of her tidings. His whole face brightened as he stretched his hands towards her. The avenue was deserted, save for a stray dog, and Madame's yellow cat, which sidled against the tree trunks. Josephine ran to him and he caught her hands.

"Si, Si, Louis, I have got it—the position at the Hospital! Madame spoke for me last week. And she was pleased

with the clothes, she said they were beautiful. Did I not tell thee, Louis, how clever I was? Now we can be married in five years."

He drew her arm through his and they turned homewards.

"Perhaps in four years, Josephine. Marcel will be old enough to work then."

"Yes. . . ." The answer was so hesitating that Louis stopped abruptly and looked at her.

"How old is he now?"

"He is seven, but "

"Of course he will be able to work then — why he will be eleven!"

"Yes, Louis, I know. But then Marcel is not very strong and my father has always spoilt him. He is so much younger than Pierre."

"Humph!" Louis grunted, then taking Josephine's arm once again, they marched on as before, only this time in silence. When at last he spoke, there was more vehemence than usual in his voice.

"I tell you what, Josephine, Marcel will work if I can make him. He delicate!

Bah! lazy perhaps spoilt, sure! I've seen that child play with the boys on the street he makes me mad!"

"But he is so little yet

Perhaps just the time he must work, Josephine! or else get the devil to the family is enough."

"For shame, Louis! You must not talk so, and of a priest! You are wicked!"

"Well, I can't help it, Josephine I love you and, sapré, it makes me mad to see you slave like this!"

She pressed closer to him. "Come, Louis, don't be cross, let us talk of our wedding."

"And how rich we will be?"

"Oh, Louis," remonstratingly

A little house in the country Josephine, white, with a red roof."

She clasped his arm with both her hands. They had reached the side streets now, dark and dreary.

"And a garden with pretty flowers Louis?"

"Surely, and a horse and cow?"

"Chickens, Louis, lots of hens and chickens—"

"And children, Josephine, eh chere?"

Ah! yes, Louis, beautiful children how they will laugh and play!"

Josephine laughed herself as she spoke.

They were crossing the market place, and in the shadow of the stalls it was quite dark. Louis stooped and kissed her. So these two faced the years joyously, without fear or doubt.

PART II

Six o'clock had just sounded from the tower of the Cathedral, and Madame Latour laying aside her sewing, rose and crossed over to the stove. The kitchen was still bright, for it was the end of April, and the sunshine, though late in reaching the small back window, gave it a last rays in payment for tardiness.

Seven years had come and gone over the Latour household since Josephine and Louis first wove their dreams in the chill autumn. Of such a household, time can alter but little the material prospects changes, if any, are manifest only in the individual members. The inevitable quota

of work and hardship, of homely joys and sorrows had been theirs.

Madame Latour was a little woman, old before her time. Years of constant attendance upon a sick bed had traced nervous lines upon her face, and drawn the colour from her cheeks, leaving the skin dry and yellow. She was deeply religious; for her the one ray of brightness amid the dark hours was the thought of her son, Pierre's vocation.

She raised the lid of a steaming saucepan and looked at the contents, as she did so a voice from the next room called querulously

"Is Marcel in?"

"Not yet, 'Poleon."

"Is Josephine home?"

"Not yet, 'Poleon. Is the pain bad?"

"Bad! Of course it is bad. I hope Josephine has come to her senses, that is all."

"I hope so, too!" Madame clasped her hands, and closed her eyes a moment in prayer; then turning to the cupboard she commenced preparations for supper.

From the bedroom, presently, came the

sound of movement, followed by a mare's groan.

"I will come, Poleon — one minute," she called, hastening towards the door, but the sufferer bade her desist.

"There is no use, Yvonne. Thank the Blessed Mother, it will not last much longer. Didst thou tell Father Theodore this morning?"

"I told him, 'Poleon,'" his wife's tone was matter of fact, "he will be with thee at the end."

"Didst thou tell him of our trouble with Josephine?"

"Yes, I told him."

"And what did he say?"

"He said Josephine was a good girl, and that he would probably see her; but she must decide for herself."

"I cannot think what she has against Marcel."

"It is not that — she wants to marry."

"And she would let that stand in the way of my son's vocation! It is not every family, Yvonne, that can boast of two sons as priests. She would let her selfish

wishes stand against that! Mon Dieu! where is her religion?"

"She says she has worked for seven years to support Pierre."

"Then let her work seven more and be glad of the honour."

"She says Marcel is only pretending that he has no true call."

"Mon Dieu! Who is she to judge! She is hard hearted, and has never cared for Marcel. She has no love for me. She knows I am dying, but what does she care for that?"

There was no answer for a moment. The mother in Madame Latour was struggling against the claims of religious sentiment.

"But, 'Poleon, Josephine has worked hard for seven years—she has never complained."

"And why should she?"

"Hush, 'Poleon, here she comes."

It was not Josephine, however, but Marcel who entered. A pale faced boy, thin and small for his age. Marcel had inherited from his mother a certain refine-

ment of features, which lent currency to an impression amongst the family's friends, that the boy was a born scholar, and intended for some higher calling than that of an ordinary workman.

It was this impression which had kept him at school two years after the appointed time, and Josephine still slaving at her wash-tubs, despite the indignant protests of her lover. Even Pierre, who, if all went well, would be ordained next Easter-tide, shared the same opinion of Marcel's capacity.

He entered the kitchen nervously, as though prepared for some unpleasantness, which he would have gladly escaped.

"Marcel!" his father called, and the son paused beside the open door of the bedroom.

"Oui, mon père."

"Thou art still of the same mind, Marcel?"

"Oui, mon père."

"Hast thou talked with Father Théodore and examined thyself well."

"Oui, mon père."

"Thou know'st what this will mean to thy Mother and Josephine? Even though I am gone, it will mean many years of hard work for them."

"That is the only thing—" Marcel moved uneasily as he spoke—"perhaps I should—"

With uplifted hand, Monsieur Latour silenced him.

"No, Marcel, let them be proud to give their work for the Church. That is a small sacrifice for so great an honour. Two priests—even thine Uncle Bastien, with his fine family, cannot boast of that!"

Marcel turned away. The supper dishes clattered upon the table; and his mother bade him be seated. The meal passed in silence; when it was finished, the boy took up his cap and went out.

The lamps had been lit, and the last dishes washed and replaced in the cupboard, ere a sound from without told of Josephine's coming. The front door opened and closed again softly; then light steps were heard in the passage, and the next

moment Josephine was standing within her father's bedroom.

Year by year, as she had developed from an impulsive girl into a brave, hard-working woman, the tragedy of Napoleon Latour's suffering had grown more apparent to his daughter. Looking back to her childhood, and later still to her school days, she could recall her father the big, honest engine driver proud of himself and his work, proud of his wife and family proud, above all, of their small home and its simple comforts. And in a moment, in the mad onrush of trains, in the hurtling, awful collision came darkness, and all his pride had been swept away. Since then, Napoleon Latour, maimed, suffering, a helpless cripple, had dragged out the long hours of each day upon his couch in a small ill lighted bedroom; and only those who tended him, or Father Théodore, the parish priest, knew of the bitterness of heart, which made war upon itself within those confining walls.

It was this that Josephine remembered now, as she stood beside the bed looking

lown upon her father. He seemed asleep one gaunt arm lay bare upon the counterpane. His breathing was irregular, his head thrown back, showing his bearded throat and bare neck, where the shirt was open.

Josephine did not move, her gaze was riveted upon the bed: suddenly her father opened his eyes and looked at her.

"So thou hast come in! And hast thou grown more reasonable?"

"That depends on what you mean, Father."

"Thou know'st quite wc what I mean, Mam'selle. But I can see thy mind is set against it."

"Mon père, do not let us discuss this to-night we are both tired."

"Tired! And why should'st thou be tired? Hast thou lain here all day thinkıng of a daughter's wilfulness? Make no excuses, Josephine."

"All the same, I cannot discuss Marcel to-night. I have not yet decided."

"Hast thou been to confession."

"Yes."

"Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! May La Sainte Vierge soften thy hard heart!"

"Good-night, Father."

"Good-night so early? I suppose thou wilt refuse to help thy mother next?"

Words were useless; Josephine turned silently and left the room. In the kitchen her mother stood waiting.

"Thou art late, Josephine, supper is finished."

"I want nothing."

"Josephine, chère——"

But she refused to listen. "Not to-night, I am going to bed."

She mounted the narrow stairs and the older woman watched, the tears gathering slowly in her eyes. When the door closed overhead, Madame sank suddenly upon her knees.

"Holy Mother," she murmured, "pray for her, pray for us all——" her hands were clasped, her eyes fixed upon a statue of the Madonna on a little shelf above the doorway.

PART III

Josephine locked the door of her bedroom behind her, and lighting the short candle, proceeded mechanically to remove her hat and jacket. Her movements were slow, indifferent. She smoothed out her black gloves, and laid them neatly upon the table; her hat was brushed and put aside, her jacket suspended from the hook beside the mirror. Then, with a great sigh, she seated herself upon the edge of the narrow bed, staring in a dazed fashion before her. Her face was absolutely colourless; her lips parched and dry, beneath her grey eyes, dark circles told their tale of suffering.

It seemed, at that moment, that there was no human creature to whom she could turn for help and sympathy. This crisis had come so suddenly, must be met so relentlessly, and with no postponement of her decision. Madame Creton, whom she had long since grown to look upon as a revered friend, rather than a mistress, would have advised, strengthened, comforted; but Madame was absent in France.

on a visit to her married daughter. As for Father Theodore, it was useless for him to counsel this or that: he was a priest; she a woman, suffering and intensely human, who had waited seven years for the fulfilment of her dreams.

Now she beheld her whole world tottering to its fall. A week since, she would not have imagined that this thing could happen. She had been willing enough that Marcel should have his extra two years' schooling, despite Louis's objections. In this she had sacrificed herself to please her father, and in the hope of bettering the boy's chances. And what had been her reward? Five days ago, when the Doctor had told them that Monsieur Latour could not last out the month; it was then that Marcel had spoken, had announced his desire of going to the Seminary, of becoming a priest.

Was it only five days ago? Josephine pressed her hands to her head: five days, and the hope of seven years gone for nothing! If she could only have believed in Marcel, it would have lessened the difficulty,

more plainly marked the path of her duty. But this she could not do; there was nothing to convince her that his wish was genuine, that some guarded motive did not lie behind his desire for education.

Downstairs she had told them "I have not decided." Up here in her room she was fully conscious of what her decision would be; how much it must involve.

She rose presently, and going over to the window, opened it and leant out. The night was clear stars overhead, soft cool air, which fanned her cheeks. Her thoughts drifted aimlessly..... Downstairs her father lay dying yes, he must die happy. To-morrow would be Sunday, she would see Louis she had not seen him for a whole week. He knew nothing of all this; but that was not his fault, he could not leave his mother she was very ill. How mild the air was to-night. . . . . Well, this time next year Pierre would be ordained, and she. . . . A dizziness seized her, she covered her face with her hands. She and Louis Oh, mon Dieu! They had planned their wedding for a week

after the ordination. Poor, poor Louis, and she had not told him yet. So kind, so good, so faithful, during their long waiting. Another seven years and she would be thirty-one, Louis thirty-four; not so old after all no. She turned from the window and taking up the guttering candle, held it above her head, and gazed at her own reflection in the mirror. Alas! She knew too well that it is not years alone that bring age into the heart. She was of the people she knew life as she saw it every day around her in the streets, neither did she lack the practical commonsense of her class.

The face which gazed out at her from the glass was haggard. Anxiety had drawn lines, of which there were no signs when Louis first kissed it. Only twenty-four and yet she could trace the grey, visible here and there amidst her hair! Then her figure she raised herself on tip-toe that she might see it better. She had grown somewhat round-shouldered in the last months, she was thinner, more angular. After all, that might be changed, if ut

there was no if. Seven years more and she would go to Louis, a woman no longer young, no longer light hearted. And Louis, what had seven years made of him? The two last, at least, had aged him: his mother's increasing ill health, his anxiety, the postponement of their marriage. Josephine had noted the change. Another seven, and Louis would be an old man, not in years, but in spirit. And this must not be, not if she could prevent it. Louis must marry; she knew this and eventually he would do so. He needed a wife; one who would share with him the care of his invalid mother, who would cheer him, make a home, who would. . . . Her raised arm sank suddenly, and she stood supporting herself by the edge of the table.

The short candle had burnt to an end, the flame shot up in a last brightness, then died out, leaving her in the dark.

It was after service the next evening, and the congregation came flocking out through the doors of the Cathedral, scattering to

east and west; gathering in groups here and there; passing in twos or threes — chatting or silent, according to their mood.

Amongst them Josephine and Louis took their way silently, each occupied with thoughts, which for the time being, at least, precluded speech. All day Josephine had waited with a sickening dread for this hour and now that it had come, strength seemed to have forsaken her. A knell sounded in her ears, paralyzing her will and choking utterance. "The last time, the last time" — these words kept repeating themselves in her brain. She and Louis had prayed together for the last time; soon they would walk together for the last time; each minute in passing brought the hour of separation closer.

As for Louis, though he knew nothing of what was passing in his companion's mind, his own was troubled enough. When they had at last rid themselves of the crowd, he drew the girl's arm more tightly through his own, and said gravely:

"Josephine, I must speak with thee, I am much worried. It is not late, let us find

some sheltered seat in the Square where we can talk."

"Yes, Louis, that is what I wish." Her voice sounded strange, for the first time, looking at her more attentively, he noticed the whiteness of her face, with its queer strained expression. He questioned her

"Josephine, art thou ill?"

"No, Louis, I am quite well, only tired."

"No wonder, but something is wrong?"

"I will tell thee presently."

Silence again. Louis was no talker; yet, in the early years of their engagement, Josephine's unconscious gaiety had proved infectious, awakening his latent sense of humour. Lately, however, he had grown morose, and, but for his sweetheart's efforts, their walks would often have passed in total silence. It was this change in him which Josephine had noted—the expression of his face also had altered. His forehead was much lined, his eyes had lost their look of keenness, growing each day more patient.

They reached the Square, and crossing it, found a seat on the far side, sheltered

by some swinging bridge. Here they sat for a few minutes, before Louis spoke.

"Josephine," he began suddenly, and she started at the sound of his voice, so tense had the strain of her own thoughts become. "My mother is very ill. It is terrible! I missed two days work last week, three days this. Yesterday the Boss told me, I must go, if I cannot do better than that. I have worked there ten years. What am I to do? If I pay a woman to look after my mother, it means more money gone—our marriage put off again."

He stopped abruptly. "What is the matter, Josephine, thou art trembling?"

She started away from him, this was her opportunity, she must speak.

"Listen, Louis," her voice broke, "the time has come when thou must marry."

"Marry, Josephine, marry!" Is it true? Can they spare thee? He caught her hand but she drew back.

"Louis, listen, I have something to tell thee. Thou must promise me to listen and not to get angry."

She did not wait for his reply, but con-

turned hurriedly, fearing perhaps that her strength might give way. After all there was not much to be said; what could words avail, save to state clearly the facts as they stood. Only toward the end did her voice break. Louis leant forward then and took her hands in his.

"Josephine, Josephine, thou canst not mean this; it cannot be true?" Tears were in his eyes, his chest heaved. "Thou shalt not sacrifice thyself so. They cannot demand that. And what of me, dost thou care so little as all that?"

"Louis, Louis, canst thou not understand?" She was weeping now, the first tears which she had shed; they brought relief with them.

"I understand that we have loved each other all these years; that thou art promised as my wife."

"But, Louis, our duty, our religion."

"Duty, religion!" his voice grew vehement; "what do I care for them? They have only kept us apart. As for Marcel, I tell thee he is lying. I want thee,

Josephine, thee, thee! Oh, Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! After so many years!"

He broke down utterly, and leaning forward, buried his face in his hands. Josephine bent towards him, her hand rested upon his shoulder: in proportion as his strength went, hers seemed to return. She spoke now calmly, though not without effort.

"Louis, thy mother is so ill, why dost thou not send her to the Hospital? It would be much easier."

He glanced up a moment, as if to read her meaning.

"I cannot, Josephine. I have promised her she shall remain at home always. It would kill her."

"And thou would'st have me refuse that which will make my father die happy, when he has suffered so much? No, Louis, thou art a just man."

"But, Marcel"

"Hush!"

"He does not know what he asks. Remember thy father is a sick man, Josephine. It cannot be right—he is dying."

"A promise is a promise, Louis, to the living or the dead. I have given mine."

Her hand dropped from his shoulder when she looked up, he found her sitting very still, with hands clasped in her lap.

"Josephine," he pleaded gently, and drew her to him; this time she did not resist. Thereafter, they talked but little a vision of the future was before them both

. . . . . .

One winter's morning six years later, Madame Creton entered her kitchen, a newspaper in her hand. The room was full of sunshine. Outside, brightness flooded the whole world, making the frost upon the window panes glisten with a thousand crystals.

By the table stood Josephine, her arms white to the elbow, as she raised them for a moment from the basin of flour at her side. Katie had long ago abdicated; and since Madame Latour's death two years before, Josephine had become a permanent inmate of the Creton household.

It had happened with her, even as she had foreseen, in these years. The face that

turned to greet Madame Cretois's entrance was no longer young the grey had spread amongst her hair. Yet the eyes, which smiled their welcome, were full of a serenity unknown in the old days of passionate unrest.

Madame advanced to the table, and peered at her paper.

"I have good news for you, Josephine," he said. "Louis has a little daughter."

Josephine stopped working, and looked down at the paper in front of her. There was a few moments silence, then she sobbed:

"I am very glad," she said simply. "How happy they will be. And to think his mother should have lived to see it!"

Louis had married five years ago, Louise Bardeau, the daughter of an old neighbour, first there had come two boys, and now a girl. No wonder they would be pleased.

Madame smiled; coming quite close to Josephine she laid a hand upon her arm, and gazed straight into the grey eyes.

"Josephine, tell me, it is gone now, the old bitterness, is it not?"

"Oh, Madame!"

"The heart has stopped aching?"

"Ah! yes, I am glad that he should be happy."

"That is right. It was a hard road, Josephine, poor child! Tell me, would it have been easier if Marcel had acted differently, if he had made a good priest?"

Josephine considered a moment before answering, then she spoke thoughtfully:

"No, Madame, I do not think so. You see, I never trusted Marcel. I was sure he would never be a priest. When he ran away from the Seminary three years ago, I was not surprised. I knew, way, that it was vocation he was lost. Marcel would not work like other boys. Louis knew too, but I could not get my father to understand. He was proud of his sons, he felt that if I denied Marcel his wish, I denied God and his Church. They all thought that. My father died happy, Madame."

"I know, Josephine."

"But you do not know what most

helped me, Madame. Do you remember once years ago, I had told you all about Pierre, and how pleased we were that he should be a priest, and you said 'But, Josephine, it is not to these religious ones only that the call of God comes?' I do not think I understood what you meant, then."

She paused and Madame waited. "You said, Madame, 'God calls to every man and woman, Josephine. Sometimes he speaks through their religion; for most of us through our love, or our duty. It is not always easy to answer.' Long afterwards, Madame, I remembered that—I understood."

She ceased speaking, and at first Madame Creton did not answer; many memories stirred within her brain, her thought shaped itself slowly.

"Josephine, I have sometimes felt, that if you had not yielded—if you had married Louis as you intended, neither of you would have been quite happy."

The kettle humming upon the range was the only sound which broke silence. A

minute passed, then Josephine spoke
"You are right, Madame," she said softly,
the tears standing in her eyes.